

# SENATE DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

# Press Release

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## **Senate Democrats Fight for Michigan Worker Training Funds, Nursing Assistance**

*Measures would support help for displaced workers, growing job sector*

LANSING—As the State Senate voted today on 2009 budget bills, Senate Democrats fought to restore funding for important economic growth initiatives like the successful ‘No Worker Left Behind’ (NWLB) program and the Michigan Nursing Corps program. The proposed amendments sought to focus today’s budget on tomorrow’s economy, supporting programs to create jobs and get Michigan citizens back to work in growing fields.

Senator Glenn Anderson (D-Westland) and his Senate Democratic colleagues fought to restore \$40 million to expand No Worker Left Behind. So far, 22,000 displaced workers have enrolled in programs to provide them with new skills and training to transition to high-tech or high-demand careers, but there are 12,000 currently on waiting lists. Companies are having difficulty filling needed positions because of the lack of available skilled workers, and this money would provide the Department of Labor & Economic Growth with the flexibility it needs to address this backlog and expand this promising program even further.

“Michigan’s ability to succeed in a changing economy hinges on our ability to provide a healthy, highly-skilled workforce,” said Sen. Anderson. “We need to make sure our displaced workers have access to services and programs that will help them get back on their feet and compete for 21<sup>st</sup> Century jobs.”

Senate Democrats also joined Senator Martha G. Scott (D-Highland Park) in pushing for funding for the Michigan Nursing Corps program to \$10 million. In 2005, Michigan nursing education programs turned away over 2,000 qualified applicants, and it is estimated that Michigan will be 7,000 RN’s short by 2010 and 18,000 RN’s short by 2015. The Michigan Nursing Corps will provide new classroom faculty and clinical faculty who will, in turn, be able to produce over 3,000 additional RN’s to serve Michigan citizens.

“Michigan is currently facing a shortage of nurses and with adequate funding, Michigan’s Nursing Corps program could train thousands of nurses by the year 2010 to fill these critical positions,” said Scott. “It is a rare opportunity for this state to have an economic sector whose demand is larger than the supply of skilled workers, and this

initiative would not only fill these open job positions but also create jobs for faculty to educate students.”

In addition to the economic-driven debate today, Senate Democrats also offered amendments to expand family resource centers and day care funding, support abuse prevention programs, establish a pilot mental health study for juvenile offenders, increase fire protection grants and limit use of credit scoring in certain employment practices. Sen. Scott’s amendment to expand family resource centers in Genesee and Ingham counties was the only measure to receive bipartisan support and passage today.

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**Editor’s Note:** To view a short video clip of Sen. Anderson discussing the No Worker Left Behind program, visit <http://www.senate.mi.gov/dem/play.php?id=416>.